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ABSTRACT

Because discrepancies between individual needs and institutional roles are so often neglected in planning educational change, attention to this dimension may prove worthwhile. Evaluators who have omitted the evaluation of the effects of educational innovation on the total system--not just the students--may find it productive to assume this additional responsibility. It is hypothesized that greater productivity may be realized if institutions undergoing change attend to and respond to the real and the projected anxieties of all those responsible for and affected by the change, since implementors may undergo greater changes than clients. Those involved in effecting change may need assurance that they can be competent in their new roles, and that their needs will be identified and responded to. Such identification and supportive response is a key to establishing a climate where change can be productive and "non-events," or business-as-usual teaching under the cloak of a project title or number, will be at a minimum. The transactionally oriented evaluator could participate in the usual formative, summative and cost tasks, but he would also ask additional questions about (1) Who is involved? (2) What is expected of them? (3) How are they threatened by change? (4) How do they make compromises between their needs and the reward system? (5) In what way, and how adequately does the institution assess the consequences of change, not only on the system clients, but also on the members of the system? (Author/BJG)

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TRANSACTIONAL EVALUATION AND
THE IMPROVEMENT OF INSTRUCTIONRobert M. Rippey, Ph.D.
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In the quest for the answer to the question, "why is change in schools so difficult?", I have become involved in a number of evaluations ranging in from single classrooms through large segments of a very large school system. In the evaluation of three large scale efforts at inter-institutional collaboration among a university, a school system, and a community: 1) The Woodlawn Experimental Schools Project, 2) The University of Illinois Teacher Corps, and 3) The Crane High School Satellite Program, I found each of the involved institutions stressed by the vicissitudes of change. One thing became clear about each of these attempts to move an unwieldy institution. The teachers were usually called upon to change more than the students.

Although traditionally much effort is spent studying the consequences of new programs on students, the traditional approach to evaluation often spends precious little time studying what happens to the teacher and other personnel in the school. As a result, evaluations have often been made of programs which were in fact not implemented, or poorly implemented at best. Acknowledgment of the fact led the federal government to demand evaluation of the degree of implementation in Project Follow Through, and Charters (1973) to issue a statement of concern over the possibility of evaluating "non-events."

Although concern for non-events is a welcome change for the evaluator who, in the past, has often been content to plod along collecting his summative data while the ship was sinking, it is possible for the evaluator to do better. On a strictly objective basis, using a spectrum of tools from behavioral sciences, he can learn why teachers and schools encounter such difficulty when the demands of a new program are articulated. Secondly, he can share this

information with project directors and staffs as a part of formative evaluation. This information, acknowledged and responded to can ultimately reduce the frequency of non-events.

There are many forces which affect change in schools. Corwin (1973) in his study of the National Teacher Corps suggested the following: 1) Power Structures, 2) Resources, 3) Task Structures, 4) Status Characteristics of Members, 5) Occupational Environment. And of these, perhaps the most important is number four: the effect of change on the status structure or system or roles played out by students, parents, teachers, and administrators and the threats to these roles which change presents. These perturbations of status structures are a primary target of transactional evaluation.

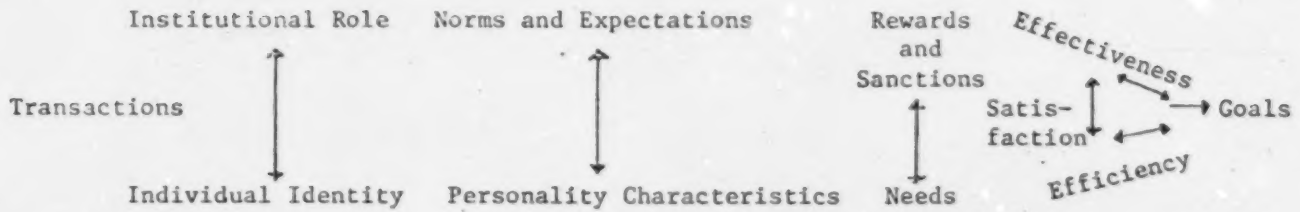
Autonomy and isolation are two primary characteristics of the teacher's work situation. A teacher may value his/her autonomy highly. He may even be willing to strike for it. Yet the autonomy can be tied to isolation. However, the teacher, as captain of his classroom, isolated spatially by his four walls and temporally by his busy schedule, may still not be the master of his soul. For isolation, which is the price he may have to pay for his autonomy, may shield him from the inputs he needs to plan well, and may wall in his outputs to such an extent that he cannot be influential in effecting change. Although autonomy may be prized for its own sake, the concomitant isolation may lead to alienation and perhaps to a sense of powerlessness and despair. Thus the origin of such phrases as "They won't let us do it," "No one cares." Is there any way to reconcile an individual's needs to assert his identity and aspirations with the sometimes implacable and contradictory expectations of his institutions?

At different times in history, different answers to these questions have been popular. In those places and times where hunger was common, human life cheap, and despair universal, the answer was "no". Both man and

his institutions were perceived as so weak and imperfect that there was no hope. This position is the essence of some of the eastern religions. A second position assumed that institutions were adequate but people were not. It was the task of the institution to make individuals conform. When I was in the Coast Guard, the rule was "shape up or ship out." A third position held that the institution should adapt to individual demands and needs. Rousseau popularized the third position. All of these three positions, though placed in the order of appeal, have serious defects. The deficits of the first two positions are obvious and Hogan (1973) has eloquently laid to rest the pretensions of the various schools of individualism. The fourth position is the transactional position. It considers both the individual and the institutions powerful and necessary. An individual's identity is related to the institutional role he plays. Nevertheless, institutions must be responsive if they are to contribute to the quality of individual lives. Individuals need to understand how institutions make demands on them and affect their lives and their character. The individual, in turn, has responsibility to make demands on his systems; to engage in many transactions with them in order to make certain needs are met. But how can these transactions between individual and institutions take place? In any group or institution resources need to be committed to maintaining negotiations across the transactional gap between individual and institution.

A classical model of organizations attributed to Getzels and Guba (1957) consists of an institutional dimension made up of a set of roles, norms, and rewards and sanctions placed in opposition to an individual dimension of personality characteristics and needs.

MODIFIED GETZELS-GUBA MODEL OF AN INSTITUTION



Such a model can show the relationship of transactional evaluation to formative, summative, and cost effectiveness evaluations. Summative evaluations generally evaluate program effectiveness in terms of goals. Cost effectiveness studies deal with a limited aspect of the efficiency dimension. Transactional evaluation is an elaboration of formative evaluation which is concerned with the satisfaction dimension and the other vertical lines between the institutional dimension and the individual dimension. Perhaps satisfaction is a bad term to use since it has so many emotional connotations. Perhaps it denies the beneficial constructive tensions and conflicts which characterize vital institutions. That denial is not intended. Transactional evaluation looks at institutional roles and asks, "What are the roles defined by the institution?" "What is expected?" "What will happen to me if I don't conform?" It also asks, "Who are the people who are to fulfill these roles?" "What do they need to develop commitment?" Finally, "What are the conflicts if any, between the institutional and individual dimensions?" It also asks questions about how people manage to deal with the strains that arise due to proposed and implemented changes. Are the normal formal and informal aspects of the institution adequate to deal with the strains which change imposes, or are additional institutional or personnel changes needed in order to maintain performance and progress toward old and new goals?

The transactionally oriented evaluator could participate in the usual formative, summative and cost tasks, but he would also ask additional questions about 1) Who is involved?, 2) What is expected of them?, 3) How

are they threatened by change?, 4) How do they make compromises between their needs and the reward system?, 5) In what way, and how adequately does the institution assess the consequences of change, not only on the system clients, but also on the members of the system?

Organizations such as assembly lines turning out a constant product to a stable market require little by way of transactional activity. Roles are clear and people accept positions knowing what is expected from them and what they can expect from the job. On the other hand, where demands from both outside and inside an institution lead to changing roles and expectations, transaction is at a premium.

Unfortunately, these transactions do not take place automatically. Katz & Kahn (1966) have identified organizational subsystem which facilitate transactions. These subsystems occur to a greater or lesser degree in different organizations and are devoted to maintenance of the work structure, obtaining institutional support, mediating between employee needs and institutional needs, and adaptation to the pressure of change. These institutional subsystems may or may not be prominent in schools. Often their functions are performed out of dire need, informally, in the teacher's lounge over the noon hour. This informal performance of crucial functions is adequate when the demands on a school are small. But when the heat is on, love is not enough. Without either the time or the expertise, schools subjected to intense demands for change often defend themselves by becoming more rigid, by isolating themselves, by denying the existence of problems, by rejecting the invading demand or idea for change or sometimes, by simply falling apart. In order to avoid overreaction to change, it is necessary to build a climate for change. A favorable climate for change is nurtured by starting change on a small scale, on an experimental basis. In addition to this, it is necessary that the functions of maintenance and adaptation be performed adequately. Transactional evaluation becomes a necessary ingredient.

The need for transactional evaluation in times of institutional stress has been exemplified recently in a study of the human impact of the Managua earthquake. (Kates, Hass, Amaral, Olson, Ramos, and Olson, 1973). Although it is unlikely to find a school in as dire stress as a city recently leveled by an earthquake, the analogue is not unreasonable. Under the extreme stress of the earthquake the normal human reactions to stress were amplified. Kates reports that the very first activity after the earthquake occurred was a kind of evaluation: "Initial assessment of physical AND human effects: through direct observation, contacting others, seeking to contact others, seeking to discover what has happened, who is hurt, and who is safe" (Kates, et al, 1973). The second activity involved immediate efforts to ensure individual survival. The third activity reported again involved a kind of evaluation - at least information gathering - efforts to search for the trapped and injured. Once information was gathered, efforts were made to establish communications and the stimulate the flow of information. Although I have cited an extreme case, this response to an earthquake begins to look like what I refer to as "transactional evaluation." For the fundamental untrained response to the earthquake was an immediate assessment of the gap between individual needs and institutional capabilities and demands, followed by the stimulation of information flow.

Elaboration of basic concepts and case studies may be found in Studies in Transactional Evaluation, (Rippey, 1973). In brief, transactional evaluation attempts to uncover the apprehensions of persons involved in institutional change, whether the change be an earthquake or a computer terminal in a classroom. Its techniques can be used at all levels from the classroom teacher to the top administrator. It involves institutional introspection. Whenever someone asks, "How is this change affecting the feelings of the people either in or involved with this school," he is interested in transactional evaluation.

Transactional evaluation is a continuous process which takes place in four phases. 1) Identification of transactional issues, 2) Consensus testing and priority setting, 3) Fact finding, 4) Decision making and action. The cycle may then be repeated at regular intervals.

Identification of Transactional Issues

The first step of the cycle consists of exploring the concerns of persons involved by the change. It is important to sample a variety of shareholders. Parents, teachers, and students, are a necessary but not always sufficient set of interest groups whose roles and needs should be explored. Sampling of these concerns may be carried out by means of what I refer to as a transactional questionnaire.

Perhaps the most important characteristic of a transactional questionnaire is that the items are solicited from as many persons representing each identified interest group as is feasible. These statements are then utilized with a minimum of editing and selection. Of course redundant items are screened out and occasional rewording may be necessary. But in general, the statements should be kept as close to the original wording as possible. You might ask, "Should ambiguous statements be included?" I know of no theoretical answer to this question but in practice an ambiguous statement may precisely represent the state of mind of a particular group and therefore might be eminently suitable for identifying that issue.

It should be clear then that such instruments can only be developed for reasonably sized groups lest the instrument itself become unwieldy.

FIGURE 1
Transactional Evaluation Instrument

A - strong agreement; a - agreement; d - disagreement; D - strong disagreement

Role: _____

Statements	*Roles	Responses			
		A	a	d	D
#1	P/C				
	Stu				
	Sch				
	Univ				
	P/C				
	Stu				
	Sch				
	Univ				
#3	P/C				
	Stu				
	Sch				
	Univ				

*Roles: P/C = Parents and/or Community; Stu = Students; Sch = School Teachers and Administrators; Univ = University Personnel.

Items of high quality can be stimulated by a few good initial probes, or even by some role playing on critical issues prior to the solicitation of items. Items may also be contributed to the questionnaire by the evaluator in case no one mentions the usual concerns such as: "I'm not certain I will be able to do a good job in my new role" or "I wonder how the parents will react to the new program?"

Consensus Testing and Priority Setting

Once the items have been assembled into a questionnaire, it is administered to the persons who contributed the items. The results are summarized and the meaning of the items, the implications of the new information, and the appropriate consequences are discussed. In some instances the picture is clear and in other cases further information is necessary. When new information is needed, this suggests the development of an evaluation committee which will utilize a wide range of research and evaluation techniques to answer the crucial questions raised in the initial issue identification.

Further Information Gathering

An evaluation committee may be crucial part of the transactional evaluation process. Although every educational evaluation will probably have a formative and summative evaluation plan outlined prior to implementation or funding, the transactional evaluation plan must grow along with the program. The evaluation committee, made up of both protagonists and reasonable antagonists will be responsible for planning and implementing or having implemented, the design which will be governed by the primary concerns of each interest group. In the performance of this task, the evaluation committee will employ a wide range of research and evaluation skills. It may attack a variety of questions not commonly encountered in a more conventional evaluation. For example, in the Crane High School program, some of the questions explored were: 1) Would parents of more able students really send their children to Crane if a more demanding academic program should be offered? 2) Would the board of education be willing to make certain modifications in their design for remodeling the building in order to accommodate proposed changes and 3) In view of recent moves in opposition to testing, how would the community react to an increased emphasis on testing within the high school?

Decision Making and Action

Once full information is available and priorities are set through group discussion, adjustments to the program plan can be made. This adjustment then leads to another recycling through the process. In a study of the impact of computer terminals in the classroom, Compton (1975) and Compton et. al. (1975) found the following procedure useful and informative. In preparing a new instrument, they asked the participants to review the old items and classify them as to whether they continue to be issues. If 10% or more considered that an item was still an issue it was placed on the new instrument. If not, the item was classified as resolved. Participants were also asked to submit new items which were then incorporated into the questionnaire. He thus obtains a profile over time of the onset, development, and resolution of crucial issues. This profile can then be associated with the chronology of the program.

Psychometric Issues

Up to this point little has been said about the psychometric issues of reliability, validity, and generalizability. The relevance of these issues depends on the phase of the evaluation.

The transactional instrument itself perhaps requires anti-reliability, and anti-generalizability. Since the purpose of the instrument is to explore everyone's concerns, not just consensus, the instrument will exploit rather than be impeded by a large amount of subject-item interaction. Furthermore, if the instrument is comprehensive it will probably lack any semblance of item homogeneity. Such characteristics do not usually contribute to high reliability coefficients. However, high reliability coefficients are of no value at this point of exploration and identification of issues.

Nor does generalizability seem to be a particularly useful characteristic for the first stage of transactional evaluation since transactional evaluations aim is specificity. The transactional instrument is prepared for a particular group of people, here, and now. The same set of items will probably never be repeated for a different group in a different setting, nor should it.

On the other hand, validity is always important. At least, the meaning of responses must be clear. This is done through the discussions in phase two, and through the further information gathering of phase three which will confirm and elaborate upon the meaning of the initial responses. At this point the entire range of psychometric skills should be employed.

Summary

Because discrepancies between individual needs and institutional roles are so often neglected in planning educational change, attention to this dimension may prove worthwhile. Evaluators who have omitted the evaluation of the effects of educational innovation on the total system--not just the students--may find it productive to assume this additional responsibility. Further research on transactional evaluation should test the hypothesis that greater productivity may be realized if institutions undergoing change attend to and respond to the real and the projected anxieties of all those responsible for and affected by the change. For implementors may undergo greater changes than clients. Those involved in effecting change may therefore need more assurance that they can be competent in their new roles, and that their needs will be identified and responded to. Such identification and supportive response is a key to establishing a climate where change can be productive and "non-events" will be at a minimum (Charters, 1973). A

non-event, according the Charters is business-as-usual teaching under the cloak of a project title or number. Transactional evaluation can help identify needs which are often felt but seldom admitted because of their implication of personal weakness.

The responsible internal evaluator will see to it that the project he is evaluating does not fail for lack of insight into the impediments to implementation which he is in a unique position to explore. An evaluation presents an incomplete picture out of context if it does not explore and describe the perturbations of the system undergoing change. Having access to such information, the evaluator is negligent if he does not feed it back. If no one looks at the impediments, it is likely that teachers will begin to spend more and more time constructing non-events which give the illusion of progress. This wheel spinning may be functional to them in preserving the aspects of their jobs with which they feel most comfortable. Thus non-events may subvert program design while preserving the status quo under an illusory cover of superficial change. How many innovations deserve the epitaph "It was a good idea, but no one really did it?" did it?"

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